

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 201809

LIMDIS - PASS DEP. ASST. SEC. DALLEY

FOL RPT GUATEMALA 5332 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON BELIZE
23 AUG 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5332

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR GT UK BH

SUBJ: BELIZE

REF: (A) STATE 195280 (B) GUATEMALA 5226 (C) STATE 198357

1. SUMMARY: I MET WITH FORIEGN MINISTER MOLINA ON BELIZE
AUGUST 22, MAKING APPROACH AS AGREED IN REFTELS. MOLINA ACCEPTED
WITHOUT DEMUR OUR ARGUMENT THAT NOW IS BEST TIME TO SETTLE BELIZE
AS NEXT GOG ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT HAVE AS MUCH
FLEXIBILITY AS PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S, BUT HE URGED THE NEED FOR
GREATER BRITISH FLEXIBILITY ON TERRITORIAL QUESTION AND SUGGESTED
THAT WE TALK TO THEM IN THAT SENSE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT PRESIDENT
BELIEVES THAT HE CONNOT SELL MOHO TO GUATEMALAN PUBLIC OPINION
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AS BASIS OF SETTLEMENT. HE SAID PRESIDENT WOULD MEET WITH
HIS BELIZE ADVISERS AUGUST 26 TO DECIDE WHETHER TO SEND
REPRESENTATIVES TO LONDON IN ADVANCE OF MOLIN'S NEXT
MEETING WITH ROWLANDS, INDICATING THAT HE PERSONALLY
FAVORED THIS COURSE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA LAST EVENING,

I TOLD HIM THAT THE SECRETARY HAD ASKED ME TO SEE HIM TO EXPRESS OUR INTEREST AND OUR CONCERN ABOUT PROGRESS IN THE BELIZE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO URGE THEM TO MOVE FORWARD AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. I SAID THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE SERIOUS CRISIS THAT HAD DEVELOPED IN MID-SUMMER WE WERE NOW CONCERNED THAT THE ISSUE NOT BE SIDETRACKED UNTIL AFTER THE GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS. MOLINA INTERRUPTED TO ASSURE ME THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SIDETRACKED SINCE THEY EXPECTED A HEAVY DEBATE ON THE ISSUE AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, A MATTER WHICH VERY MUCH CONCERNED THEM AS THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE PUT UP AGAINST THE WALL IN THE DEBATE. HE SAID HE HAD MADE THIS POINT VERY STRONGLY TO ROWLANDS. I SAID THAT THIS DID NOT REALLY MEET OUR CONCERN AS I DID NOT THINK THAT THE UN DEBATE WOULD NECESSARILY ADVANCE THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND THE UK, WHICH WAS THE ESSENTIAL ASPECT. I SAID WE WERE CONCERNED THAT THE NEXT GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE LESS FLEXIBILITY, LESS LATITUDE IN DEALING WITH THIS DELICATE ISSUE THAN PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S ADMINISTRATION HAD AND THIS WOULD BRING WITH IT THE ATTENDANT POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DELAY AND THE CONSEQUENT DANGER OF A NEW, MORE SERIOUS CRISIS. I ASKED HIM IF HE COULD TELL ME WHERE THEY STOOD ON THE QUESTION OF SENDING A TEAM TO LONDON IN ADVANCE OF HIS SEPTEMBER MEETING WITH ROWLANDS.

3. MOLINA SAID THAT IN FACT HE HAD JUST SPOKEN TO THE
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PRESIDENT ABOUT THIS AND THEY HAD AGREED TO HAVE A MEETING OF THOSE CONCERNED WITH BELIZE ON FRIDAY TO DECIDE THIS POINT. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY FAVORED THE IDEA OF SENDING A REPRESENTATIVE OR REPRESENTATIVES TO LONDON(OR PERHAPS TO SOME ALTERNATIVE SITE) BUT HE DOD NOT KNOW WHAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD DECIDE. HE SAID HE HAD POINTED OUT TO THE PRESIDENT THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD GO TO LONDON ABOUT SEPTEMBER 3, WHICH WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE OF HIS MEETING WITH ROLANDS ABOUT SEPTEMBER 20. I SAID WE WOULD LIKE TO URGE THEM TO SEND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO LODON, OR WHEREVER THE MEETING MIGHT BE HELD, AS THIS APPEARED AS DESIRABLE STEP TO EXPEDITE THE NEGOTIATIONS. TIME WAS IMPORTANT, AND THIS MIGHT SAVE TIME.

4. MOLINA SAID THAT WHAT GUATEMALA NEEDED WAS A COMPROMISE THAT THEY COULD LIVE WITH IN HONOR. IN A SENSE, HE SAID, IT GOT DOWN TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION COULD SELL TO GUATEMALAN PUBLIC OPINION, AND THE PRESIDENT DID NOT THINK THAT THE MOHO LINE COULD BE SOLD TO PUBLIC OPINION HERE. HE SAID THIS WS A CONTROVERSIAL AND VERY SERIOUS MATTER, SO SERIOUS THAT A GOVERNMENT COULD FALL ON THIS ISSUE. IT WOULD DO NO GOOD,HE NOTED, FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO

REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH BRITISH WHICH WOULD THEN BE
OVER-TURNED IN THE CONGRESS.

5. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE PERSUADED THAT THE MONKEY RIVER
LINE WAS NOT SALEABLE TO THE BRITISH. I SAID THAT THIS APPEARED
TO US TO BE THE OPTIMUM TIME TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH
WHICH BOTH SIDES COULD LIVE EVEN IF SOMEWHAT UNHAPPILY,
AND WE THEREFORE WANTED TO URGE THE DESIRABILITY OF MAXIMUM
FLEXIBILITY IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE BRITISH ON THE QUESTION OF
THE LINE. MOLINA SAID HE WAS AFRAID THAT IF THE BRITISH STUCK
ON THE MOHO RIVER LINE AND THE GUATEMALANS ON THE THE MONKEY
RIVER, THERE WOULD BE AN IMPASSE. HE SAID THAT ROWLANDS
HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN, IN DISCUSSING THE MONKEY RIVER
LINE, ABOUT PUNTA GORDA AND IT POPULATION OF 8,000.
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MOLINA SAID THAT THERE WERE WAYS TO MEET THIS CONCERN AND GUATEMALA
COULD ASSIST ECONOMICALLY IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF ANY FAMILIES
THAT WANTED LEAVE PUNTA GORDA IF ITS STATUS WERE TO CHANGE.
HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVING SOME LECTURES IN WHICH HE
WAS TRYING TO GET GUATEMALAN PUBLIC TO THINK MORE REALISTICALLY
ABOUT BELIZE, TO REALIZE THAT THEY COULDN'T HAVE ALL OF ITS AS
THEY HAD PERHAPS BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO THINKING IN THE PAST.
THIS WASN'T ADDING TO HIS POPULARITY AND HE WAS RECEIVING A
LOT OF INSULTING LETTERS. HE ADDED PHILOSOPHICALLY THAT MANY
MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE IN THE PAST, THAT SOLUTIONS HAD BEEN
POSSIBLE IN EARLIER YEARS BUT OPPORTUNITIES HAD NOT BEEN SEIZED.

6. I SAID I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF HE WOULD TELL THE PRESIDENT
BEFORE FRIDAY'S MEETING ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S INTEREST AND
THE POINTS I HAD MADE, AND EMPHASIZE TO HIM THAT WE FELT
THIS WAS THE BEST TIME TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. HE SAID
HE CERTAINLY WOULD . HE INVITED ME TO CALL HIM FRIDAY
AFTERNOON TO LEARN DECISION ABOUT SENDING TEAM TO LONDON.
HE SAID IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF THE SECRETARY WOULD TALK
TO THE BRITISH AS WELL TO GET THEM TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE.
I SAID I THOUGHT WE HAD ALWAYS BEEN EVEN-HANDED IN OUR
APPROACHES TO THE TWO SIDES; HE AGREED THIS WAS SO.
HE ASKED ME TO THANK THE SECRETARY FOR HIS INTEREST AND
REFERRED TO US AGAIN AS AN HONEST BROKER.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOT MUCH EXPLICIT
ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS DISCUSSION WITH
THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THERE
IS ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY IN GOG POSITION TO PERMIT ACCEPTANCE OF
LESS THAN THE MONKEY RIVER LINE AND WE SUSPECT MOLINA
WILL BE A RELATIVELY MODERATE INFLUENCE IN THE PRESIDENT'S
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COUNCIL. BUT THE GOG'S EVENTUAL DECISION WILL BE MADE ON THE BAIS OF AN EVALUATION OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL COSTS OF THE GOG POSITION AND I WAS STRUCK BY THE EMPHASIS MOLINA GAVE TO HIS STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT THOUGHT HE COULD NOT SELL THE MOHO, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH TRIED MIGHT WELL FALL. IT IS POSSIBLE TO READ MOLINA'S REMARKS AS POINTING TOWARD THE NEED FOR A LINE THAT IS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE MOHO AND THE MONKEY, AND DEPARTMENT MAY WANT TO URGE BRITISH IN THAT DIRECTION.

BOSTER

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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